

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 01676

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY AND TARNOFF

PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR MONDALE AND BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CU, PEBR
SUBJ: REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY ON CUBANS IN AFRICA

1. IN THE REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY AND ACTIONS TOWARD THE
CURRENT CUBAN PRESENCE AND ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA WE SHOULD
KEEP FIRMLY IN MIND CURRENT U.S. POLICY GOALS. WE MUST
BE CONCERNED LEST IN ATTEMPTING TO COUNTER THE CUBANS AND
SOVIETS WE LOSE SIGHT OF OUR BROAD GOALS AND PERHAPS
REDUCE THE EXTENT OF OUR INFLUENCE IN AFRICA.

2. I AM INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE
ESCALATION OF U.S. EMOTIONS AND STATEMENTS CONCERNING
CUBAN ACTIONS AND POLICIES IN AFRICA TODAY AND
THOSE THE U.S. EMPLOYED TOWARD THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
OF CHINA DURING THE 50'S AND 60'S. THE FEARS AND
ATTITUDES EXPRESSED IN THE RHETORIC ARE ALMOST IDENTICAL.
WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THE EMOTIONALISM WHICH
CHARACTERIZED OUR APPROACH TO CHINA CONTRIBUTED TO THE
ESCALATION OF THE KOREAN WAR AND TO PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN
THE U.S. WHICH MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CONDUCT A PRAGMATIC
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POLICY TOWARD CHINA. THESE ATTITUDES ALSO CLOUDED U.S.
THINKING CONCERNING REALITIES IN VIETNAM. THE RESULT
WAS DISASTER FOR U.S. POLICY IN THE AREA. ONLY WITH A
RATIONAL AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO GAIN
THE DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

3. THUS FAR, IN DEALING WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION IN

AFRICA AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES THERE, WE HAVE PROFITED FROM THE LESSONS LEARNED IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRC. WE HAVE AVOIDED A MILITARY ENGAGEMENT, BUT THIS IS ONLY HALF THE PROBLEM. IN THE ABSENCE OF MILITARY OPTIONS IT BECOMES EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAT AGGRESSIVE AND PRAGMATIC DIPLOMATIC OPTIONS ARE EMPLOYED. WE MUST AVOID ALLOWING THE SPECTRE OF THE "CUBAN THREAT" TO DISTRACT US FROM BASIC PROBLEMS IN AFRICA AND DRAW US INTO MAKING OPPOSITION TO CUBA THE CENTERPIECE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. TO THE EXTENT THAT WE ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN, OUR OVERALL CREDIBILITY WITH AFRICA WILL BE WEAKENED, AND THE EMERGENCE OF CREATIVE AND PRAGMATIC DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES WILL BE HINDERED.

4. I AM AWARE OF THE REACTIONS OF SOME CONGRESSMEN AND ELEMENTS IN THE U.S. MEDIA TO THE CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA AND THE FACT THAT TO SOME EXTENT THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO INVOLVED. HOWEVER, PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS CONDEMNING THE CUBANS AND LINKING THEM TO THE SOVIETS ONLY FURTHER HARDEN PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THE U.S. AND HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE ABROAD. A WAY MUST BE FOUND TO ADEQUATELY INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THE VALUE OF POSITIVE U.S. INITIATIVES IN AFRICA AND OF NECESSITY FOR LOW-KEY, BUT EFFECTIVE DIPLOMATIC MEANS OF LIMITING CUBAN AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCE IN AFRICA.

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5. THE POWER OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. IN THE LONG-RUN IT WILL WORK FOR US AND AGAINST EXPANSION OF SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCE. THE CRUDENESS OF SOVIET DIPLOMACY ALSO WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE A LIMITING EFFECT ON THEIR INFLUENCE. THE AFRICANS JUST DO NOT LIKE THE SOVIETS.

6. PUBLIC CRITICISM FROM U.S. OFFICIALS WILL NOT DETER THE CUBANS. NOR WILL PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS STOP THE SOVIETS FROM ENCOURAGING THE CUBANS AND FROM PLAYING A SPOILING GAME AGAINST THE EFFORTS TO FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. THEY WILL KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO SACRIFICE SALT FOR THE OGADEN. IN FACT, THE MORE WE "GO PUBLIC" THE MORE THE U.S. WILL APPEAR TO BE IMPOTENT.

7. NOR WILL A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN BY THE U.S. INFLUENCE THE AFRICANS TO OPPOSE CUBAN INVOLVEMENT. THEY MUST SEE THE THREAT FOR THEMSELVES, PERHAPS WITH A BIT OF DISCREET NUDGING FROM US. ALTHOUGH SOME AFRICANS PRIVATELY EXPRESS WORRY OVER CUBAN PRESENCE AND ACTIONS, CUBA TO DATE HAS KEPT OAU OPINION

ON ITS SIDE. THE CUBANS EVENTUALLY WILL OVERPLAY THEIR HAND -- MAYBE ERITREA WILL BE THE BREAK -- AND AROUSE THE IRE OF THE AFRICANS, BUT THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED YET. IN THE MEANTIME, THE U.S. SHOULD TAKE CARE NOT TO BEHAVE LIKE A BEAR REACTING TO CUBAN BAITING. FOR THE U.S. TO SHOW TOO MUCH CONCERN AT THIS POINT AND NOTICEABLY TRY TO STIMULATE A REACTION TO CUBAN ACTIVITY WILL NOT HELP THE PROCESS, AND IN FACT COULD LEAD SOME AFRICANS TO DEFEND THE CUBANS.

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FOR SECRETARY AND TARNOFF

PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR MONDALE AND BRZEZINSKI

8. CERTAINLY, THE CUBANS WOULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL AFRICAN SUPPORT SHOULD THEY ENTER THE RHODESIAN SCENE DIRECTLY IN SUPPORT OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL TO DATE IN LIMITING CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT BY OUR CLOSE WORK WITH THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO PLAY FAIR WITH THE PF. HOWEVER, PRESSURES FOR CUBAN INVOLVEMENT WILL INCREASE. CLEARLY ITS POLITICAL AND PROPAGANDA INTERESTS WILL BE ENHANCED BY ESCALATING ITS INVOLVEMENT IN RHODESIA.

9. OUR MOST EFFECTIVE COUNTER-TACTIC IS TO PERSUADE THE AFRICANS THAT WE ARE TOTALLY COMMITTED TO FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS AND THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT AND PEACEFUL COMPETITION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA. ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE ARE TWO GOOD EXAMPLES OF WHERE WE MIGHT DEMONSTRATE THIS BEFORE THE CONGRESS.

10. IN ADDITION, WE SHOULD:

--DRIVE HOME TO THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS PRIVATELY THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO FINDING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE DISPUTES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND TO THE RHODESIA AND
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NAMIBIA SITUATIONS.

--ALLOW AND, IF POSSIBLE, DISCREETLY ENCOURAGE MODERATE AFRICANS AND ARABS TO TAKE THE LEAD IN EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER CUBAN AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES. THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE READY TO GET OUT IN FRONT YET, BUT IF THE PROBLEM OF EXTERNAL INFLUENCE GROWS MORE SERIOUS, MAYBE THEY CAN BE PERSUADED TO SPEAK OUT.

--APPROACHES TO NAM MEMBERS OUTSIDE AFRICA--EVEN IN AFRICA FOR THAT MATTER--SHOULD BE EXTREMELY SELECTIVE. NAM MEMBERS ELSEWHERE WILL NOT BE INCLINED, IN THE ABSENCE OF CONDEMNATION OF CUBAN OR SOVIET ACTIVITIES BY THE OAU, TO GET OUT IN FRONT OF THEIR AFRICAN BROTHERS IN CONDEMNING CUBA FOR ITS AFRICAN ADVENTURES.

--THE FURTHER POLARIZATION OF US DOMESTIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM VIGOROUS, BUT INEFFECTUAL, DENUNCIATION BY THE U.S. OF CUBAN/SOVIET ACTIVITIES WOULD HAVE A SERIOUS RESTRICTING EFFECT ON CURRENT U.S. POLICY GOALS IN AFRICA AND WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

11. IN SUM, I AM CONCERNED LEST WE YIELD TO SHORT-TERM PRESSURES BY UNDERTAKING A COURSE OF ACTION WHICH WOULD LEAD TO FAILURE TO ACHIEVE OUR LONG-TERM GOALS IN AFRICA. WE MUST ENCOURAGE AND ALLOW AFRICAN POLITICAL FORCES TO CARRY THE BRUNT OF THE EFFORT TO COUNTER THE CUBANS IN AFRICA, PARTLY BECAUSE A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN BY THE U.S. WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE ANYWAY AND WOULD THREATEN OUR LONG-TERM POLICY GOALS. THE MOST EFFECTIVE DIRECT ACTION WE CAN TAKE TO COUNTER CUBAN AND SOVIET INFLUENCE IS TO PRESS ON TO SOLVE THROUGH PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS THE PROBLEMS AFFLICTING AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE LIMITS TO US INFLUENCE. YOUNG

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